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# INTELLIGENCE:

## Second Thoughts

For the past year, it had seemed nearly certain that the Congressional investigations into abuses by the CIA and FBI would lead to at least one solid reform: the creation of a strong Congressional oversight committee to watch over the nation's intelligence community. But recently enthusiasm for reform has cooled in the Senate. And last week, in a surprising turnabout, the House voted, 246 to 124, to bar release of a report by its select committee on intelligence until it had been cleared by the Administration.

The main reason for Congress's change of heart was the growing realization that investigating the CIA has become bad politics. "My constituents keep asking,

bellishments of stories that had been printed months or even years ago.

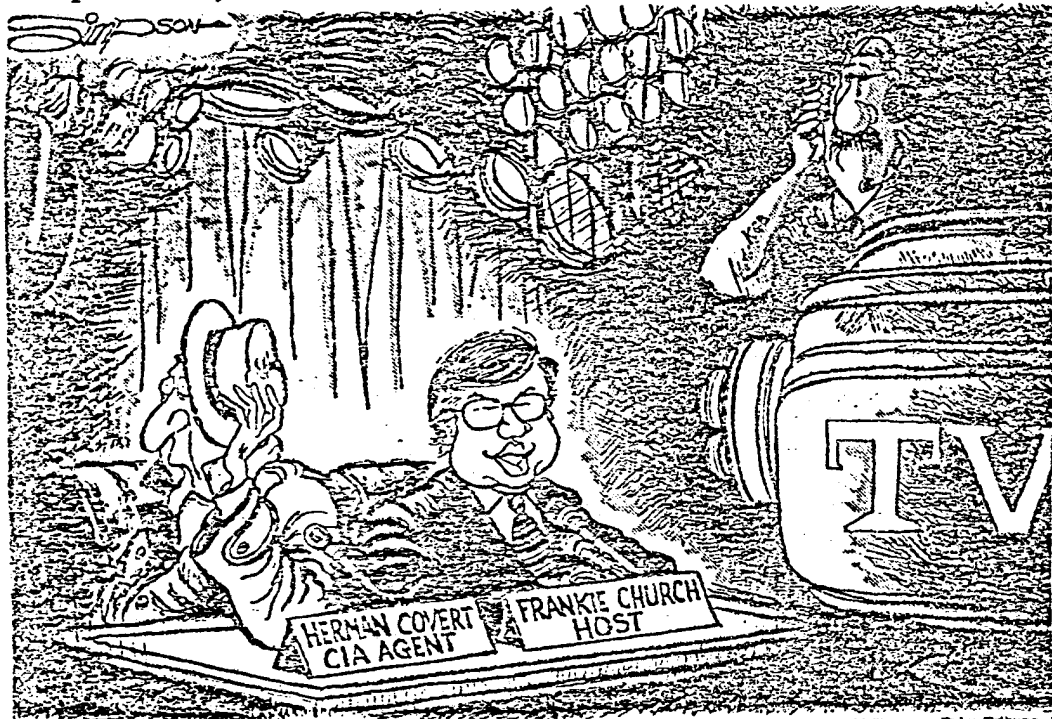
But the White House reacted to the leaks in a well-calculated fury. Partly, the Administration's outrage was prompted by a genuine belief that the stream of leaks from Congress—if not stopped—would endanger the nation's security. Quite clearly, however, the President also sensed that the time was ripe for a counteroffensive.

Stung: To drive home his point, Ford made a special visit to CIA headquarters in Langley, Va., for outgoing CIA director William Colby's farewell speech to his troops and the swearing-in ceremonies for his successor, George Bush. "We cannot improve this agency by destroying it," the President told a cheering audience. Stung by the President's criticism—and by the House's

tational politics with the executive branch and his inability to stop the leaks. Even so, the twin investigations represented a start at Congressional scrutiny.

The Pike committee's embarrassment at the hands of the House dealt a severe and possibly fatal blow to the creation of a permanent oversight panel in the House. Eventually, the Senate will probably establish some sort of an oversight committee of its own. And at the urging of the CIA, which would prefer to reveal its secrets to one Congressional committee rather than the half dozen it reports to now, Ford himself was expected later this month to recommend a joint oversight committee, with limited powers to proscribe or reveal the agency's covert operations. In the end, Congress and the President would probably reach some compromise; the irony was that Congress, which a year ago ripped into the intelligence agencies with such gusto, might not give them as much oversight as even they desired.

—SANDRA SALMANS with EVERT CLARK and ANTHONY MARRO in Washington



David Simpson—Tulsa Tribune

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to "I Had a Secret"'"

"Why are you giving all our secrets to the Russians?" said Ohio Democrat Wayne Hays. In recent months the public's initial worry over the "intelligence horrors" of the CIA apparently has been overtaken by its concern at the Christmas Eve murder of its Athens station chief, Richard Welch—and the subsequent publication in foreign journals of the names of other suspected CIA agents. Furthermore, the leaking of most of Rep. Otis Pike's intelligence committee's top-secret draft report to The New York Times over the past two weeks has raised doubts in Congress's own mind about its ability to keep secrets.

Leaks: The leaks themselves were generally unspectacular. Most of them, including the CIA's gift of military aid to the Kurdish rebels as a favor to the Shah of Iran and the agency's \$800,000 pay-

decision to submit his committee's report for clearance to the White House—Pike threatened to jettison the entire report, asserting that the vote in the House made his committee's investigation "an exercise in futility."

That assessment was probably unduly harsh. After decades in which Congress studiously ignored the activities of the CIA and FBI, the Senate and House committees on intelligence had finally shed some light on a few of their darker deeds. Sen. Frank Church's committee documented the CIA's flimsily authorized assassination plots against foreign leaders and the FBI's harassment of Martin Luther King Jr., while Pike's panel zeroed in on the intelligence that taxpayers were getting for their money. The investigations were admittedly flawed: Church was damaged by fruitless searches for scandal and his own priggish de-